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ABSTRACT

This press kit for the Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project (WCCIP) includes: (1) an information sheet for child care personnel that offers a plan for publicizing child care issues; (2) a list of state and federal resources; (3) fact sheets on child care supply and demand in Wisconsin, characteristics of child caregivers, high quality care, and financial support for child care; and (4) sample press releases and feature stories on school-age child care, child care regulation, child care staff, cost of child care, employer-supported child care, and high quality child care. (RH)

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THE WISCONSIN CHILD CARE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

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A Child Care Press Kit

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WISCONSIN CHILD CARE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Wisconsin Child Care Fact Sheet

#1 CHILD CARE SUPPLY AND DEMAND: WISCONSIN

Child care refers to the care of children for less than 24 hours by someone other than the parents or legal guardians. Child care is provided to enable parents to work, to seek employment or to participate in training that will lead to employment. Child care is an essential service to the economic stability of Wisconsin communities.

HOW IS CHILD CARE REGULATED IN WISCONSIN?

In Wisconsin, child care has been regulated since 1949 by the Department of Health and Social Services if the care and supervision is provided for compensation for 4 or more unrelated children under the age of 7 for less than 24 hours a day outside of their own home. Such child care centers, whether in a home or a group center, must obtain a license. Family day care centers serve 4-7 children while group child care centers serve 9 or more.

Child care providers who serve less than 4 children in the home of the provider must be certified by the County Department of Social Services if any child is in their care whose tuition is paid for by public funds or if the provider wishes to participate in the USDA Child Care Food Program reimbursement.

Most persons who care for young children do so because they take pride in helping young children learn and develop. There are, however, some persons who neglect or even mistreat children. In order to protect all children in child care programs in Wisconsin, the programs are required to be licensed. The rules cover areas of:

- ratio of staff to number of children
- the size of the group by age of the children
- the cleanliness and safety of the facility
- policies for discipline, administration, transportation (if provided), education, nutrition, health, safety, employee orientation and training
- the appropriateness of child toys and educational equipment
- the relationship with parents of the children in care
- employee qualifications and training

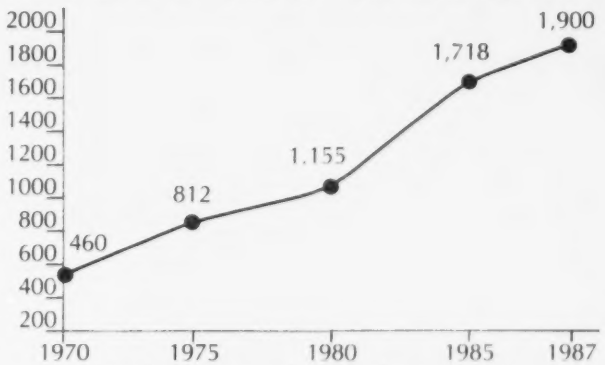
DEMAND FOR CHILD CARE

- In Wisconsin, working women with young children rose from 19% in 1960 to over 55% in the mid-1980's; 67.3% of the women with children ages 6-13 are working. (Department of Administration, 1986)
- With a projected population in 1985 of over 389,980 children under the age of 5 years, it is estimated that approximately 136,493 will have a mother who is employed outside of the home.
- Using national averages, there may be over 155,500 children ages 6-14 in Wisconsin who care for themselves before and after school each day.
- In Wisconsin there has been over 79% increase in the number of single parent families with children under 6 from 1970-1980. The trend is particularly alarming amongst Black families in Wisconsin, in which we find over 58% of the families with young children are headed by a single parent, up from 33% in 1970.

SUPPLY OF CHILD CARE

The supply of regulated child care settings has grown significantly in the last 25 years to accommodate the use in demand for day care services. The number of licensed centers has more than quadrupled since 1970, to 1900 in 1987. The capacity of Wisconsin child care centers was estimated to be 56,014 in 1987.

LICENSED DAY CARE CENTERS IN WISCONSIN



(includes licensed group day care and family day care centers)

SOURCE: Department of Health and Social Services

LICENSED DAY CARE CENTERS IN WISCONSIN
April 1987
Licensed Day Care Centers Statewide
(includes group and family day care centers)

CENTERS BY TYPE	STATEWIDE TOTAL
# Group day care centers	1,303
# Family day care centers	559
# Full-time day care centers	1,271
# Part-time day care centers	683
# Centers serving children under 2 years old	829
# Centers serving children 7 and older	1,084
# Day care centers - TOTAL	1,899

SOURCE: Department of Health and Social Services

RESOURCES

1. Department of Health and Social Services, Day Care Statistics, David B. Edie, Day Coordinator, 1 W. Wilson, Madison, WI 53703; (608) 266-8200.
2. DHSS Day Care Advisory Committee, Child Care in Wisconsin: A Long Range Plan, 1986.

This information has been prepared by the Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project. Federal, state and private funds support the WCCIP to start up and improve child care in Wisconsin.

WCCIP • c/o WECA, 1245 E. Washington Ave., Madison, WI 53703

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#2 WHO CARES FOR CHILDREN?

Early childhood staff, from teachers aides to teachers to directors, are the essential ingredient to high quality child care. Yet they are perhaps the most under-valued and under-paid workers in our society. (Betty Cleworth, President, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association)

TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHILD CARE STAFF

Wisconsin child care licensing rules require a minimum of 40 hours of training for family day care providers and assistant teachers and 80 hours for lead teachers. Program directors and center administrators must have training in business management as well. Early childhood education degrees and the CDA Credential are recognized as meeting the training requirements. Experience with young children is also required of teachers and makes Wisconsin one of the few states to require both training and education qualifications for staff. Furthermore, child care staff are required to obtain 15 hours of continuing education each year to maintain their skills in working with young children and keep abreast of new knowledge about effective teaching methods.

In Wisconsin, a WECA 1980 study showed that:

- 73% of child care administrators had a college degree
- 6% of the family day care providers had completed college

A 1983 CSR, Incorporated data collection report on Head Start staff in Wisconsin showed that:

- 43% of the Head Start teachers had an early childhood education degree
- an additional 40% held the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, a competency based training and on-the-job-supervision program.

The Dane County Community Coordinated Child Care (4-C) 1986 Update paper reflected 74% of the center staff had some college, a college degree or an advanced degree.

JOB SATISFACTION

The Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) study showed that most child care workers stated that working with children, seeing them grow and develop, working with parents and participating in a center's program were key factors that gave them satisfaction in their current job. However, the same study showed that 38% said they work overtime regularly at least once per week.

Most child care teachers and directors choose this line of work because they find it challenging, intellectually stimulating and emotionally satisfying to help children grow and learn. They see child care as an essential service to the economic well-being of their community. (Corkie Nelson, Past President Wisconsin Day Care Administrators Association)

COMPENSATION ISSUES

- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, golf caddies, dog groomers and parking lot attendants earn more than child care workers even though the child care teachers have more education
- The WECA Study showed that in 1980, 76% of the child care employees earned $4.00 or less an hour.
- The Dane County 4-C study showed that in 1986, teachers averaged $4.66 per hour, assistant teachers earned an average of $4.02 per hour and directors earned $7.00 on the average.

STAFF TURNOVER CONCERNS

The 1980 WECA study showed that:

- 79% of all child care staff had been at their present job less than 3 years, and
- 61% of the family day care workers have been at their current employment for less than 4 years.
- At a time when the demand for child care is increasing, qualified teachers are leaving the field.

RESOURCES

1. WECA/AEYC, "A Study of Day Care Workers in Wisconsin, 1980." WECA/AEYC, 1245 W. Washington Ave., Madison, WI 53703.
2. CSR, Incorporated, "CDA: A Final Report, 1984." CSR, Inc., 72 W. Monroe St., Chicago, IL 60603.
3. Dane County Community Coordinated Child Care, "1986 Update." Dane County 4-C, 3200 Monroe St., Madison, WI 53711.

This information has been prepared by the Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project. Federal, state and private funds support the WCCIP to start up and improve child care in Wisconsin.

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Wisconsin Child Care Fact Sheet

#3 WHAT IS QUALITY CHILD CARE?

The central point summarizing much day care research is this: good day care has positive effects on children; bad day care is harmful to children. Knowing this research exists has implications for all individuals who operate day care; they must have an understanding of what quality means and some of the components of high quality.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD DAY CARE

Gwen Morgan, day care researcher and writer from Wheelock College, has found that the day care characteristics associated with positive effects on children include the following:

- Group size is important and affects children's behavior significantly. Small groups of young children work best. (Ruopp, 1978)
- Training is important, both for centers and family day care. Lack of specialized training not only fails to have positive effects, it is even a cause for some concern about negative effects. (Ruopp, 1978; Fosberg, 1981)
- Staff/child ratios are significant, particularly for infant care. For preschool center care, ratios are somewhat less important than group size. (Ruopp, 1978)
- Continuity of relationships between children and caregivers is important (Clarke-Stewart, 1977). Erratic government funding policies that cause children to be moved about or have their participation in programs abruptly terminated can be very disruptive to them. High staff turnover may be equally harmful to children. One study (Belsky, 1978) found that high caregiver turnover was associated with a sudden decline in IQ scores of the children.
- A design of the environment is important. Programs designed to facilitate small-group activity are associated with positive outcomes; large places with many children in one group are associated with negative outcomes. (Prescott, 1979)
- A shared relationship with parents is essential to positive outcomes for children (Fein, 1979; Shipman, 1976)
- The "match" of program to child needs is important. Different children thrive under different conditions, and it is important that there be a variety of options for parent choice and that parents be permitted such a choice (Clarke-Stewart, 1977)

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QUANTITY VS. QUALITY

In recent years, more attempt has been made to measure quality standards in child care programs. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) center accreditation program is one which emphasizes high quality programming. In Wisconsin, the City of Madison certification standards enable programs meeting higher than licensing standards to become certified. Self-study or program evaluations are used frequently by programs throughout the state. The Wisconsin Early Childhood Association is in the process of establishing quality standards for group child care and family day care programs and early childhood teachers. These are examples of systems which measure quality. Although day care has been around for a long time, it really appears in our society in a new social form—and many people (including parents, providers, and early childhood training institutions) are no longer satisfied with the "bare-minimum" in day care.

With the rapid expansion of day care across our nation and in the state, the struggle for sufficient quantity may have taken precedence over high quality. Attempts to raise licensing standards much higher than they are are often opposed on the very realistic grounds that raising standards without raising financial support for day care would cause programs to close. The current situation, then, is one with a lot more day care than ever before, several attempts at measuring and rewarding quality, and very little in the way of societal resources to enable programs to meet higher levels of quality.

Prescott and Jones (1972) found the following characteristics in quality child care programs:

- an environment that includes "softness"—many comfortable furnishings and gentle people
- privacy
- clarity and openness
- a variety of activities
- safety, but with allowances for some "daring" activities under supervision
- opportunity to relate to children and adults of different ages and cultures
- genuine love for children

RESOURCES

1. Prescott, Elizabeth and Elizabeth Jones, "Day Care as a Child-Rearing Environment," Day Care Series, Volume 2, Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1972.
2. Greenman, James T. and Robert Fuqua, "Making Day Care Better," New York: Teachers College Press, 1984.

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#4 WISCONSIN PERSPECTIVE: WHO SUPPORTS CHILD CARE?

Parent fees remain the primary source of funding for preschool and school-age child care. There have been significant public outlays of funds to help low income families. Despite increased public efforts, the funding help has not kept pace with the rising demand for child care and the rising number of low income families. (Lori Ohmes, Director, Milwaukee County Community Coordinated Child Care Program)

PUBLIC FUNDS OFFER SUPPORT

- The Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services allocated $11,266,000 in 1987 for child care tuition assistance to low income families. 36 counties reported waiting lists in 1986.
- In the 1987-89 budget, the Wisconsin legislature recommended funds from the state's General Purpose Revenue to be added to the community aids federal dollars to expand the child care assistance to low income families to reduce those waiting lists. An additional $2 million will be added by 1988.
- New welfare reform efforts in Wisconsin will provide substantial day care help to AFDC recipients in job training and work experience programs in targeted counties. Day care support in welfare reform efforts will total over $5 million by state fiscal year 1988.
- The Head Start Program is funded through federal dollars and estimates serving only 14% of the eligible children from low income families. In Wisconsin, 7,700 children were served through Head Start in 1986 and a similar funding base of $15 million is budgeted for 1987.

COST OF CARE IN WISCONSIN

- In Wisconsin, the 1986 Day Care Rate Survey conducted by county Departments of Social Services showed a range of cost from $.85 to $2.50 per hour for care. The cost of care is generally set by the local labor market trends. Infant care costs are usually higher than those of older children to compensate for the high staff to child ratios. The cost of school age child care averaged from $.85 to $2.50 an hour as well.

WISCONSIN EMPLOYERS OFFER SUPPORT

In 1985, the Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project's Employer Initiative conducted a sampling of attitudes and practices among members of the Wisconsin Association of Manufacturers and Commerce, which reflected a variety of responses to changing work and family demographics. Employers are adopting a variety of options to adjust to workers' needs for **time** to raise children, **information** on child care services, **funds** to offset the cost of dependent care, and **access** to quality care child services.

In three national surveys, employers have reported that child care benefits translate into greater productivity, reduced absenteeism, recruitment advantages, improved morale, and reduced job turnover.[2] Respondents to the WAMC survey expressed interest in learning more about these advantages to their businesses, including more about child care related tax benefits.

CURRENT PRACTICES: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The flexible benefit package that permits employees to select which benefits they want is a potential for 48.9% of the employers, while 6.2% already had the option in place. The advantages are that it is a non-taxable benefit; it can be low cost, if salary reduction is used; it can adapt to fluctuations in employee need, and it can reduce or control benefit costs. Financial assistance in the way of a direct subsidy is a possibility for about 19% of the respondents.

	Have	Are Considering /Could Consider
Benefit packages which allow employees to choose which benefits they want	6.2%	48.9%
Subsidy for parents who choose their own child care program	0.4%	18.5%

CURRENT PRACTICES: ACCESS TO CHILD CARE SERVICES

Although most research on the advantages to employers of assisting in child care is based on the provision of on-site or near-site services, Wisconsin employers, and those nationally, rank it as a low possibility. Costs, perceived liability, regulation, and fluctuating demand, are all advantages. However, in cooperation with other employers, the potential for this benefit is less remote. Many Wisonsin companies already contribute to child care programs in their communities, thereby stabilizing the availability of child care for all parents.

	Have	Are Considering /Could Consider
Child care at worksite	0.4%	14.5%
Corporate charitable contributions to child care programs	9.1%	35.5%
Cooperation with other businesses in providing child care benefits	.7%	46.7%
Contract with outside agency to provide family related services	8.7%	35.1%

[1]Department of Health and Social Services annual day care statistics.

[2]The survey was conducted in August-September, 1985. Of 850 surveyed, 276 responded, representing 116,009 workers. This project is funded by a grant to the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association from the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services. Complete survey findings are available from the Center for Consumer Affairs for $2.00 to cover printing and mailing. Employer workshops occurred during 1986.

[3]Arthur C. Emlen and Paul E. Doren, "Hard to Find and Difficult to Manage: The Effects of Child Care on the Workplace" (Portland State University, 1984)

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RESOURCES

NATIONAL RESOURCES

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN
1834 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009 • (800) 424-2460

NAEYC is a professional early childhood association with over 55,000 members. It has a Child Care Information Service, the National Academy of Preschool Programs and the CDA National Credentialing Program. Publications and audio visual materials, along with a noted journal are available.

THE CONFERENCE BOARD

WORK AND FAMILY INFORMATION CENTER
835 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10025

This research and development body has identified and collated information and data on employer support for child care.

WISCONSIN RESOURCES

CHILDREN'S AUDIT PROJECT
UW-Extension Center of Consumer Affairs
929 North 6th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202

The Children's Audit Project assesses community services for children and families and works to meet service gaps and to improve the quality of services available. Workplace and family issues have been a priority throughout the six years of the project. The project has provided the primary lobbying resources for child care public policy.

COMMUNITY COORDINATED CHILD CARE (4-C) IN DANE COUNTY
3200 Monroe Street, Madison, WI 53711 • (608) 238-7338

4-C is a child care resource and referral agency service, primarily in the Dane County area. Major activities of the agency are: services to parent seeking child care, services to providers of child care, services to employers, and public policy advocacy on the local, state, and national level.

COMMUNITY COORDINATED CHILD CARE (4-C) OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY
2014 W. McKinley, Milwaukee, WI 53205 • (414) 933-5999

4-C is a child care resource and referral agency serving primarily the Milwaukee County area. The agency serves parents seeking child care, offers training to day care providers, provides employer-supported child care referral, and works on public policy advocacy issues at the local, state, and national levels.

WISCONSIN DAY CARE ADMINISTRATOR'S ASSOCIATION
c/o Discovery Child Care, Inc.
72 Copeland Avenue, Suite 104, LaCrosse, WI 54601 • (608) 784-2904

The Day Care Administrator's Association is a professional organization made up of operators of center-based day care services. The public policy issues affecting child care are brought to members' attention by the Board for individual and collective action.

WISCONSIN EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION (WECA/AEYC)
1245 E. Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 257-0909

WECA is the sponsoring organization for the Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project and is the statewide affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. WECA's Board of Directors is made up of representatives from the wide range of child care services and interested parties; the Board has a Public Policy Chairman. WECA's statewide newsletter and communication network enables the organization to mobilize members for action on public policy issues.

WISCONSIN FAMILY DAY CARE ASSOCIATION
c/o Willetta Shanklin, Milwaukee, WI 53215 • (414) 671-0298

The Family Day Care Association is made up of family day care providers throughout the state, and is affiliated with the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA/AEYC). The organization was formed to provide support, involvement, and communication with other family day care providers. Members receive information about advocacy issues affecting child care and family day care, in particular, for individual and collective action.

WISCONSIN WOMEN'S NETWORK CHILD CARE TASK FORCE
c/o Wisconsin Women's Network
625 W. Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 255-9809

The Child Care Task Force is one of several of the Wisconsin Women's Network, and focuses its attention on issues which have an impact on children and families. Public policy issues involving child care funding, child care licensing, and resource and referral for parents are addressed through the legislative process at the state level. Members receive child care alerts through mailings and telephone networking.

THE CHILD CARE INFORMATION CENTER
317 Knutson Drive, Madison, WI 53704 • (800) 362-7353

The CCIC has early childhood resources available for loan to child care providers and has developed a free brochure for parents, "Choosing Child Care."

THE WISCONSIN CHILD CARE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
c/o WECA/AEYC
1245 E. Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 257-0909

Since 1985 the WCCIP has provided community-based services to start up and improve child care throughout Wisconsin with state, federal and private funding. The Project is a Consortium of early childhood organizations and agencies in Wisconsin. Excellent written audio visual materials have been developed.

Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project 1987

INFORMATION SHEET FOR CHILD CARE PERSONNEL

WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH THE MEDIA

The experts advise that you "get as much publicity from as many places as many times as is humanly possible!!!" What's the difference between publicity and advertising? Advertising is paid for; publicity is free. For child care providers, those are important distinctions.

In order to use the media to create positive publicity for child care issues, you'll need a **plan** for obtaining the publicity; and you'll need to **be ready** to respond quickly—to get the information out right away.

Step One: Study the Market. Watch, listen, read (with a scissors ready to clip articles), the local television, the radio, the newspapers (don't forget the shopper or buyer's guides). What kinds of formats do you notice the most; where does your publicity on child care fit in? Would it be good for the morning radio talk show that parents might listen to on their way to work? Would information on school age child care be best in the late spring when parents are concerned about what to do this summer? What pages of the newspaper, feature articles, family living section, would best suit your story?

Step Two: Develop a Comprehensive Media Contact List. What are the media sources in your area? Make a list of the names of the contact persons for each of those media sources. **Think about:** posters at a shopping mall or local grocery store or laundromat; newspapers; radio stations (which ones appeal to parents of young children); TV stations; shopper flyers. Which radio broadcaster handles the Talk Show in which you are interested? Who is the editor of the section of the newspaper you feel applies to child care stories the most? Develop a **list of the names** to contact and **the show or section** of the paper that applies to them.

Step Three: Develop an Educational Concept/Idea/Pitch. Don't miss a possible spot to put in some good publicity for child care. Does your local child care providers group have a free brochure on choosing child care or how to obtain child care tuition assistance for low income families? Do you need to address the benefits of regulation after there has been an expose of unregulated care? Think of something that the **audience** of the newspaper, the radio, the TV or shopping mall would stop to see or look at or hear. You need to sell your idea to the media contact people.

Step Four: Make your Plan. Involve all members of your child care provider group in helping you generate great ideas and realistic time lines for your program. If you work in an early childhood center program or are a non-profit agency with a Board, ask them to help you. Assign tasks to willing volunteers to insure that the greatest coverage can occur.

Step Five: Implement the Plan. There are several parts to implementation. You first need to make contact with the media people—keep calling until you reach them. Next you'll need to design your presentation; and finally you'll need to evaluate and validate the media coverage.

When **designing your idea,** a newspaper article, talk show theme, or TV news spot, think about what will work best—for you and to **catch the media attention.** A radio talk show needs a topic of current interest: child care may be popular in August as parents begin to think about care for their child during the coming year. A TV show needs to have action in pictures. A public service announcement will be a way to advertise a training event or a free publication.

For all events, be sure to highlight local persons. If you've brought in an outside guest speaker for your provider's group on the topic of a "personal safety curriculum for children," highlight the attending staff. Local people are of interest to local people.

Finally, once the event has occurred and been televised, photographed, printed or disseminated, take a few moments to **thank all of the participants,** including the media contact person. Evaluate the effect of the publicity. Did you get any follow up calls from interested persons in your community; did families in your program or friends of yours hear or notice the event—and was it positive? Be sure to share good feedback with the media person. Good feedback can open the door for future media events.

Step Six: Keep Good Records. You might keep an index card file of media events that were implemented or simply use your media plan form to record results. By keeping a good record, you'll be able to predict what will work again and what ideas to avoid. You will leave a good trail for the publicity chairperson who will someday take your place. Most importantly, you'll save yourself some work the next time you plan a publicity event!

TYPES OF MEDIA APPROACHES

There are several ways to reach the media: press releases, editorials, letters to the editor, public service announcements, photo releases, talk show interviews, media events.

Press releases. Some newspapers will accept a written news release. Use some of the samples in this Press Kit with your local newspaper. If you write a **news release**, be sure to put the most important things up front. Do answer: who, what, when, where, and why. Double space the articles and keep them to two typewritten pages. Talk with the newspaper editor or page editor about why your article is pertinent to your community. It is important to keep this type of article factual and relatively free of judgement and value statements.

Editorials. Large newspapers have a staff of several editorial writers; small newspapers often leave this to the publisher. Telephone the editorial writer and encourage the person to prepare an article on a child care issue that is timely for your area. Use the **Child Care Facts** pages of this Press Kit to present background information to the editorial writer. Offer to meet with him or her or to send them the information. Follow up with a telephone call to make sure it was received. This is the place to express viewpoints and opinions on critical issues.

Letters to the Editor. This is often the best section of the newspaper to target! Send your letter immediately following a local event or newspaper story. Select one or two key points to make in response to the article or event and state those plainly. Succinct letters have a better chance of being printed. This is the place to suggest action. Identify yourself as a member of your local child care providers group ONLY if you have their permission to do so for that particular letter.

Public service announcements. Public service announcements are intended for very brief information sharing. Announce a free brochure or event. Time the announcement to run 10 seconds (25 words), 20 seconds (50 words) or 60 seconds (150 words). Use simple words that form a picture and are conversational in style. Triple space the copy.

Photo releases. Take photographs of your organization meetings, training events, and activities. Use black and white film. Submit a 5x7-inch glossy print with the caption taped to the back. Add a double spaced typed copy of the caption to the photo. Send both to your newspaper immediately following the event. Remember: local people like to read about local people.

Talk show interviews. Most rural or urban areas have weekly or daily talk shows on the television or radio. Offer members of your group to be interviewed during a talk show. Again, timing is important; the media will be interested in a discussion of why you feel child care regulation is important after a local center has been closed or been found in violation of child care rules. Offer an interview about your **Week of the Young Child** events in April. Be prepared by keeping abreast of current events and issues in the early childhood field—read early childhood journals and newsletters. Keep a maximum of five points that you wish to address—including what your organization is and stands for—and keep to those topics. Once questions are asked, give yourself a minute to determine your major selling point—or comment—that accurately addresses the question and accurately reflects your viewpoint. Do not feel compelled to answer questions for which you do not have reliable answers.

Media event. To really catch a blitz of media attention, a media event can be a valuable plan. Plan ahead—maybe a year in advance. Use all of your media contacts: try to get printed words, spoken words and televised action. Work with a group of providers and assign each a specific type of media contact. You may highlight an open house to all child care centers and homes; sponsor a children's event such as movie or Halloween party; develop and unveil a local directory of child care programs; host an annual training conference for providers in your surrounding area. Use all the techniques mentioned about to thoroughly cover your entire event.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

1. Stephens, Karen. Courting the media with special events. **Child Care Information Exchange.** January 1985, pps 30-35.
2. **Managing the Media Maze: A Resource Guide for Child Advocates.** Available from: Child Care Employee Project, P.O. Box 5603, Berkeley, CA 94705.
3. **The Media Book: Making the Media Work for Your Grassroots Group.** Available from: Committee to Defend Reproductive Rights, 1638 B Haight Street, San Francisco, CA 94117.
4. **Child Care Information Kit.** Available from: CCIR/ISSUES, 320 Judah Street, Suite 2, San Francisco, CA 94122.
5. NAEYC Leadership Guide, **Making News: An Affiliate Guide to Working with the Media.** Available from: NAEYC, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.
6. Wisconsin Day Care Administrators Association Quality Child Care: Three Public Service Announcement cassettes. Available from: WDCAA, c/o Discovery Child Care, 20 Copeland Avenue, LaCrosse, WI 54601.

This Information Sheet was prepared by the Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project, an organization funded by federal, state and private funds to start up and improve child care services. Wendy Hinrichs Sanders, Project Director, authored this Child Care Press Kit. The Midwest AEYC funded the printing.

WCCIP • c/o WECA, 1245 E. Washington Ave., Madison, WI 53703

Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project 1987

#5 SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
(Date)

MEDIA CONTACT:
(Name and Phone)

SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE CENTER OPENS IN _____(Your Town)

The _____ (name of center or family day care home) became licensed as a child care center (or family day care home) on _____ (date of opening). _____ (name of director or family day care provider) announced that the center will begin to provide child care services for up to _____ (number of licensed capacity) children, ages 7-12 years. Already, _____ (number of children registered) children have enrolled. The child care center will employ _____ (number of staff) teachers and aides, as well as the director, to operate the school-age child care center.

The center is located at _____ (address of your center) in _____ (name of your town). The center will be open Monday through Friday from before and after school hours. Transportation to and from local public schools will be offered through the public school buses (or name other transportation services).

"We have an exciting program of educational and recreational activities planned for the children. We're eager to open," said _____ (name of director), the director.

Include a picture of your staff or your center and children to accompany this press release.

This information has been prepared by the Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project. Federal, state and private funds support the WCCIP to start up and improve child care in Wisconsin.

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Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project 1987

#5 SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE: WHO NEEDS IT?

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
(Date)

MEDIA CONTACT:
(Name and Phone)

Wisconsin families, like families all across the country, have been influenced by many changes during the past several years. These changes have resulted in increasing numbers of working parents and more single parent families. In Wisconsin, over two-thirds of the women with children ages 6 to 13 are in the labor force. This also means that there are an increasing number of school-age children who do not have a parent at home when they leave for school or at the end of the school day when they return home. These are children who need some type of school-age child care when school is not in session.

Parents have always depended upon relatives and trusted friends to help them raise their children. Children are raised by relatives, neighbors, churches, schools, and neighborhoods, as well as by parents. Today, we have added child care providers to this list of people in the community who support the effort of parents.

While school-age child care services are available in some communities, parents often find that there is not enough for all those who need and want it. In other communities parents cannot find child care programs suitable for school-age children. When parents cannot find care, they are forced to leave their children unattended, either home alone or in the neighborhood, or withdraw from the work force. It is estimated that in Wisconsin 155,000 children ages 6 to 14 care for themselves before and after school each day (based upon 1980 Census Data and Trends).

WHAT CAN BE AVAILABLE FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN?

Communities can have a variety of child care, recreation and support services available to provide safe and enriching experiences for children during the non-school hours. Some of the common types of services are described below.

SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE

School-age child care is any type of program which provides supervised child care for children between the ages of 5 and 12 years during the hours when parents are at work and school is not in session. This may include before school, after school, the time around the shorter kindergarten day, all day during school vacations and the summer.

TYPES OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE

SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE CENTERS. These are group programs that are planned for school-age children and offer an interesting variety of activities, healthy snacks and supportive adults. Programs may be located in school buildings or in other facilities such as a day care center, a YMCA, or a church.

FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES. This care is provided in a private home and often includes children of all ages. The hours are often flexible to allow for early morning or evening care.

DAY CARE CENTERS. A day care program that is planned primarily for preschool children can also serve small numbers of younger school-age children before and/or after school.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS GEARED TO NON-SCHOOL HOURS

In almost every community there will be a variety of activities available after school. Some of these activities will have a fee, while others will be free of charge and most will only be offered one day a week. Parents and children can plan a daily schedule using these activities. Some times these activities are combined with one or more days of child care. Children may be responsible for getting themselves from school or home to the activity, which may prohibit the use of some of these community resources.

TYPES OF COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

COMMUNITY RECREATION ACTIVITIES. Includes the supervised recreation activities with games and crafts and the groups that focus on specific sports such as soccer or baseball.

LIBRARY ACTIVITIES. A story hour, movies or special programs.

CLUB MEETINGS. Includes groups such as 4-H, Scouts, or Camp Fire Girls.

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN SELF-CARE

Some older elementary school children and middle school children may not need supervised care but can benefit from self-care support services. These services are designed to provide some support for children taking more responsibility for their after school activities, whether at home alone or in the community.

TYPES OF SELF-CARE SUPPORT SERVICES

SELF-HELP TRAINING. Courses designed to help parents and children evaluate self-care readiness and learn some of the skills needed to be safe when an adult is not present.

TELEPHONE REASSURANCE AND HOTLINES. A telephone service, often staffed by volunteers, available to children during non-school hours to answer questions, help children solve problems, or just listen and talk with children who are alone.

HOW DO COMMUNITIES DEVELOP SERVICES FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN?

Someone in the community sees that there is a need; a parent can't find care and is not willing to leave the child alone, a school principal or teachers are concerned about the number of children who hang around the building after school, a librarian or the store owner near the school can't cope with the large numbers of children that come after school. These individuals share their concerns with others and together they begin to seek solutions. To be effective, these groups often need information and support.

Each community needs to develop its own plan for services which will build on existing resources and natural systems for helping friends and neighbors. Through a cooperative effort a variety of services can be available to meet the needs of children and families.

WHERE DO YOU GET INFORMATION AND HELP IN WISCONSIN?

The 1986 federal Dependent Care Bill made money available to the states to help plan and develop school-age child care programs in public schools and community facilities. In Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project received a grant to provide these services to communities. Training, technical assistance and some planning grants were offered around the state to help groups develop effective programs for school-age children. In 1987 ten communities received planning grants to develop new school-age child care services.

In addition, a statewide School-Age Task Force was created to provide public education and coordination for the planning of school-age services, as well as to identify some of the barriers to the development of programs and address some of the issues related to school-age care.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Are children in self-care safe? Because of the lack of care and the cost of care, are children being expected to care for themselves too soon? What are the effects of self-care? Research indicates that some children suffer debilitating fears when left to care for themselves, while others who are more mature and better prepared do not seem to have negative affects. Public agencies such as police and fire departments report a number of their calls result from the problems experienced by unsupervised children. Should the state be concerned that young elementary school children are left without adult supervision?

What should be the relationship between school-age child care and public schools? School buildings are some of the best locations for school-age child care services because of the close proximity to home for many children and because using such space eliminates the need for transportation. What incentives can be offered to schools to encourage partnerships between schools and community agencies so that school space is available but that schools are not expected to operate the programs?

How can low income families be assured of receiving these services? Most programs charge a fee for the services and are self-supporting. Low income families must depend upon tuition assistance to pay all or part of the fee. Will there be sufficient child day care funds through county community aids or adequate funds in a welfare reform proposal to provide children with quality school-age programs?

Can agencies offering school-age child care find liability insurance at reasonable rates? Liability insurance is required of all child care programs. Like many other agencies and even communities, finding insurance coverage is extremely difficult. Without liability coverage programs cannot be developed. What solutions can be found for the insurance crisis?

More information about the Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project, School-Age Initiative or the School-Age Task Force can be obtained from the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association Office, 1245 East Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53703; (608) 257-0909.

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Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project 1987

#6 CHILD CARE REGULATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
(Date)

MEDIA CONTACT:
(Name and Phone)

CHILD CARE CENTER OPENS IN _____(Your Town)

The _____ (name of center or family day care home) became licensed as a child care center (or family day care home) on _____ (date of opening). _____ (name of director or family day care provider) announced that the center will begin to provide child care services for up to _____ (number of licensed capacity) children, ages _____ (enter the ages to be served). Already, _____ (number of children registered) children have enrolled. The child care center will employ _____ (number of staff) early childhood teachers and aides, as well as the director, to operate the center.

The center is located at _____ (address of your center) in _____ (name of your town). The center will be open Monday through Friday from _____ (hours you will be open).

"We have an exciting program of educational and recreational activities planned for the children. We're eager to open," said _____ (name of director), the director.

Include a picture of your staff or your center and children to accompany this press release.

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Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project 1987

#6 CHILD CARE REGULATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
(Date)

LOCAL CONTACT PERSON:
(Name and Phone)

FROM: Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project
a non-profit state funded project
Wendy Hinrichs Sanders
P.O. Box 369, Hayward, WI 54843
(715) 634-3905

IS YOUR CHILD CARE PROVIDER REGULATED?

There has been tremendous growth in the number of child care and nursery school facilities over the past twenty years and particularly in the last ten years in _____ County and throughout the United States. While there were 460 licensed child care programs in Wisconsin in 1970, that number jumped to 1900 in 1987. The growth is partly due to the increase in women who work outside of the home and partly because many parents are interested in having their children receive a preschool program with an education and socialization experience.

While some programs operate for a full day and some for part day, the three types of child care facilities which have developed in Wisconsin are: **certified child care,** serving up to three children; **licensed family day care centers,** serving four to eight children; and **licensed group child care centers,** serving from nine to as many as a hundred or more children. Accompanying the expansion of child care services has come to greater understanding by child care policy makers of the needs of children.

In order to assure that the basic needs of children are met and that their safety and well-being is protected, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services has regulated child care programs since 1949. Through its regional offices, the Department **licenses** child care programs that serve four or more children under the age of seven at one time (either full or part day) for compensation.

Child care providers who serve less than four children in their home are not required to be licensed. They must, however, be **"certified"** by the County Department of Social Services before the county can purchase care from that provider for children of low income families or before the provider can participate in the USDA Child Care Food Program reimbursement.

Most persons who provide early childhood programs for young children do so because they take pride in helping young children grow and develop. There are, however, some persons who neglect or even mistreat children. In order to protect all children in preschool programs in Wisconsin, child care programs are required to be licensed.

The licensing rules include standards which cover the following categories: the ratio of staff to number of children and the size of the group of children, by the age of children; the cleanliness and safety of the facility; the policies, for discipline, administration, transportation (if provided for the children), education, nutrition, health, employee orientation and inservice training, and safety; the appropriateness of child materials, toys and educational program; the relationship with parents of the children; and employee qualifications and training. All licensed centers have received a visit from a child care licensor prior to operation and continue to receive announced and unannounced monitoring visits regularly.

It is expensive to provide high quality group or family child care. Programs must have a staff of highly trained specialists who understand how to enhance children's growth; they must meet appropriate child/staff ratios; and they must have ample space and equipment for children to work, rest and play. Child care providers struggle with inadequate wages and the programs are often forced to operate in inexpensive facilities to help keep the costs of high quality child care somewhat affordable for parents.

Licensed group child care centers in _____ **County** include: _____. **Licensed family day care** is provided by: _____.

Persons interested in more information about obtaining a child care license may contact: (put here the title, address and telephone number of your region's child care licensing office).

Persons interested in receiving information to start up or expand a child care program may contact the **Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project,** 1245 E. Washington Ave., Madison, WI 53703.

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Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project 1987

#7 CHILD CARE STAFF

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
(Date)

MEDIA CONTACT:
(Name and Phone)

CHILD CARE CENTER IN _____ (Your Town) **HIRES NEW STAFF**

The _____ (name of your center) child care center has hired a new early childhood teacher (or aide) for this coming year. The newly employed staff member is _____ (name of staff member) from _____ (name of hometown). Ms. _____ (name of new staff) will teach the children ages _____ (age of children). She brings special skills in the areas of _____ (list areas, such as music). Her educational background includes _____ (name degree or training) and she has had _____ (number of years) years of experience in working with young children. Ms. _____ (name of staff) lives in _____ (your town) with her husband (or wife), _____ name of spouse, and children _____ (names of children, if any). She joins _____ (number of current staff) childhood teachers at the _____ (name of your center) Center. The teachers and directors at _____ (name of your center) extend a warm welcome to Ms. _____ (name of staff) and invite the public to meet her at a coffee hour at the center, at _____ (your center) from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. on _____ (date of coffee hour).

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Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project 1987

#7 CHILD CARE STAFF

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
(Date)

MEDIA CONTACT:
(Name and Phone)

WHO IS CARING FOR YOUR CHILD TODAY?

Across the United States and in Wisconsin the turnover rate among child care staff and family day care providers has reached the point where many children are having new teachers thrust upon them every few months, according to the president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

"The rapid turnover is a result of the many factors," said D. David Elkind, NAEYC President, "but the primary one is low wages." According to U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics, even golf caddies and parking lot attendants earn more than caregivers in most licensed early childhood programs.

"One of the most important things in a young child's life is having the consistent care of people who have grown to know and understand the child. This is impossible to accomplish when teachers are changing frequently. Having to adjust constantly to new caregivers is extremely stressful for young children," said Dr. Elkind.

This United States Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that child care workers have the highest rates of turnover of all occupations. Between 1980 and 1990, 42% of all child care workers will need to be replaced each year, just to maintain the current supply. For family day care providers, and annual turnover rate is closer to 60%.

Mary Babula, Executive Director of the Wisconsin affiliate of NAEYC reports that a 1980 study by her organization showed 79% of the child care center staff had worked less than 3 years at their present job; for family day care providers, 61% had worked less than 4 years in that position.

Both Elkind and Babula said that the turnover rate was due to a number of factors:

- The primary reason is low pay. A family day care provider earns an average of $4,400 a year and a teacher in a child care center makes about $9,000 nationally. The Children's Defense Fund estimates that 2 out of every 3 child care providers earn wages that are below the federal poverty wage level.
- Training requirements are incongruous with wages. While having more education than the average worker, child care staff usually earn significantly less according to the Census Bureau. Diane Adams, director of the Dane County (Madison) Community Coordinated Child Care (4 C) shares that 4-C's 1986 Report found that 74% of center staff had some college, a college degree or an advanced degree. The 1980 Wisconsin AEYC study showed that 73% of administrators had a degre or advanced degree; a 1983 Head Start report documents that 83% of classroom teachers in Wisconsin had an early childhood degree or a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential. While Wisconsin child care regulations require that all assistant teachers and family day care providers have a minimum of 40 hours of training and lead teachers must have 80 hours, they must continue to obtain 15 hours of continuing education each year to expend their skills and keep abreast of new strategies for working with young children.
- The demand for child care providers is increasing as the supply is dwindling. Over the past eight years the number of licensed child care programs in the U.S. has grown 72%. In Wisconsin, the number has jumped from 460 licensed group centers and family day care homes in 1970 to 1,862 in 1986. The percent of working women with children under 6 in Wisconsin has increased from 19% in 1960 to over 48% in 1980. At the same time the potential pool of available workers is decreasing; the number of women in the 18 to 22 age group—traditionally the biggest pool of potential child care workers—is currently the smallest it has been in 30 years.
- With increasing work options for women, many more women are refusing to accept low paid positions in child care when, given their level of education, they can easily earn two to three times as much as other jobs.

"Good quality child care is an essential support system for employed families," Elkind emphasized. "But the quality of children's experiences is dependent upon the quality of the staff who are consistently available for children."

According to local child care programs who are members of the _____ (name of your local early childhood professional organization), the high turnover rate exists in our area as well. (Include here a quote from your local affiliate president about the number of staff s/he has replaced over this year).

This press release has been prepared by the Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project, 1245 E. Washington Ave., Madison, WI 53703 in conjunction with NAEYC. Wendy Hinrichs Sanders, WCCIP Project Director, has authored this series.

Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project 1987

#8 COST OF CHILD CARE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
(Date)

MEDIA CONTACT:
(Name and Phone)

CHILD CARE CENTER RATES MUST RISE

The _____ (name of your county) County Social Service Department has completed its 1987 Day Care Rates Survey according to _____ (name of your chair), chair of the local _____ (professional early childhood organization). The Survey shows that child care rates have risen just over 2% since May of 1986. The cost of child care in this county ranges from _____ (lowest cost) to _____ (highest cost) per week per child. Cost of infant care is generally higher. Some centers give discounts for more than one child in a family. While many centers do not charge for days that children are sick or on vacation, most centers are finding these discounts difficult to continue. Says _____ (name of one director), director of the _____ (name of center) child care center in _____ (town of center), "I still have to pay my staff and save the spaces for children even if they are sick."

_____ (name of another director) of _____ (name of center) center adds, "It doesn't cost me any less money to care for more than one child from a family—I still have to pay staff and meet the child care licensing staff/child ratios. It's just getting impossible for me to offer these savings."

Center directors all agreed with _____ (name of another director), director of the _____ (name of center) center when she added, "We know that child care is expensive for parents. We're all concerned about how we can make child care affordable for parents and yet be able to pay our early childhood teachers what they're worth."

Another rate survey will be conducted next spring by the Social Service Department as it determines the going rate for child care that it must pay for child care tuition assistance for low income families.

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Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project 1987

#8 COST OF CHILD CARE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
(Date)

MEDIA CONTACT:
(Name and Phone)

WHO PAYS THE HIGH COST OF QUALITY CHILD CARE?

For employed parents of preschool children the cost of child care will consume about 10% of their income or the fourth highest family expense after shelter, food and taxes. For single parents or for those who earn less than $15,000, they can expect to pay an even higher percentage of their wages. Child care costs in the United States and in Wisconsin range from $1,500 to $4,500 per year depending on the age of the child and type of care chosen. Costs would be substantially higher if they weren't subsidized by the low salaries earned by child care staff and family day care providers.

"Child care teachers are the most underpaid, under-valued workers," claims the National Council on Working Women's report entitled, "Who Cares for Kids?" Child care teachers earn about $9,000 annually and family day care providers average about $4,400 says the report. In Wisconsin, a 1980 survey conducted by the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association showed that 76% of the child care teachers earned $4.00 an hour or less. Child care teachers and administrators also subsidize the cost of child care by volunteering their time to plan lessons and to receive training, by loaning their vehicles for transportation or field trips, or by purchasing supplies for the program. "My whole family helps out with our child care centers, comments Corkie Nelson, director of the non-profit Discovery Child Care Centers in LaCrosse and past-president of the Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association.

Support for child care also comes from the state through child care tuition assistance to enable low income families to become self-sufficient. "Although $11 million was budgeted for 1986, at least 38 counties had waiting lists of over 4,800 children for those funds, remarked Lori Ohmes, director of Milwaukee 4C's and chair of the Department of Health and Social Services Day Care Advisory Committee.

The federal government serves an estimated 7,700 Wisconsin children through the Head Start program while recognizing that it only reaches perhaps 14% of the eligible families. The USDA Child Care Food Program provides reimbursement for nutritional meals and snacks for regulated family day care providers and some centers serving low income children. The federal tax credit assisted some 4.9 million families in 1983 as reported by the Congressional Budget Office.

The private sector contributes to child care. The National Council of Churches estimates that more than 3 million children are cared for in church-housed child care centers every day. In Wisconsin, employers have begun to support the child care needs of their employees. A Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project survey with the Wisconsin Association of Manufacturers and Commerce members showed that 10.2% provide on-site child care or charitable contributions to child care programs while more indicated they would consider such ideas. In addition, 6.6% include child care in their benefits package or subsidize child care costs and over half would consider doing so.

A recent Harris Poll showed that 73% of the 1,250 adults surveyed said they would favor a tax increase in order to provide more child care support from the federal government. The Wisconsin Day Care Advisory Committee recommended in 1986 that the state consider a long range child care policy plan which included ideas to support child care and lessen the burden on families and child care workers. Some of their recommendations on funding included increasing tuition assistance to low income families, encourage increased private support for child care, restore the Wisconsin child care tax credit, develop a revolving loan fund for starting child care programs and encourage increased federal support for Head Start.

Most women who work do so out of economic need. The demand for child care is increasing as the number of working women and the number of young children increases. Competent staff are the key to quality child care. A comprehensive child care policy that includes support from both the public and private sectors must be a national priority.

"Affordable, accessible child care of a high quality is good business for employers, for employees and for children. That makes it good for Wisconsin," according to Mary Babula, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association.

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Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project 1987

#9 EMPLOYERS SUPPORT CHILD CARE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
(Date)

MEDIA CONTACT:
(Name and Phone)

CHILD CARE CENTER RECEIVES HELP FROM LOCAL BUSINESSES

The _____ (name of your center) child care center received financial support from the _____ (name of company) business in _____ (your town) last week. _____ (name of company owner) presented the center with a check for _____ (amount) to assist the center in purchasing outdoor play equipment for its outdoor play area. _____ (name of director), center director, said the funds will be used to purchase a climbing frame, a swing set and a slide for the children at the center (or name items to be purchased).

In another move, the _____ (name of business) business, which employs over _____ (number of employees) workers has arranged to offer child care reimbursement as a part of its flexible benefits package for its employees. _____ (name of owner), owner of _____ (name of business) said that the company is eager to help in meeting the child care needs of its employees. "Consistent, quality child care is good for business," he commented. Under the plan, employees may choose the licensed child care center or family day care home to which the company will reimburse a portion of their child care costs upon receipt of the child care bill. _____ (name of center director), director of the _____ (your center) child care center says that parents are pleased with the company's decision.

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#9 EMPLOYERS SUPPORT CHILD CARE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
(Date)

MEDIA CONTACT:
(Name and Phone)

EMPLOYER SENSITIVITY TO CHILD CARE NEEDS PAYS DIVIDENDS

The skyrocketing increase in dual-career and single-parent households highlights the dilemma of working parents in finding quality child care and paying for it.

Currently, two-thirds of all two-parent families and two-thirds of all families headed by single women have working parents. In 1982, the U.S. Department of Labor estimated that more than half of all American children were growing up in families in which both parents or their single parents worked.

The resulting complications of trying to balance work and family responsibilities often spill over from home to work and vice versa. Incompatible work and family schedules, difficulty in arranging and paying for child care and insufficient time for both work and family are the kinds of problems faced by working parents.

Attempts to balance these competing demands may result in mental and physical fatigue, irritability, feelings of guilt and increased stress levels—all of which can adversely affect home life and performance at work. Managing child care and other family responsibilities may cause employees to take time off from work or use work time to deal with family problems.

A number of Wisconsin employers have implemented child care practices and family-sensitive policies designed to assist employees in balancing the competing responsibilities of work and family. The available options respond to employees' needs for time to raise children, information on child care services, funds to offset the cost of dependent care and access to quality child care services.

An employer survey conducted in August 1985 among members of the Wisconsin Association of Manufacturers and Commerce shows considerable commitment to providing time options, including offering maternity leaves, part-time work, shared jobs and flexible scheduling. The survey showed 57% of respondents offer maternity leave, and another 25% would consider or are considering offering it.

Perhaps the most ideal situation for parents who can afford it is the opportunity for part-time work. 61% of association members make part-time work available, and an additional 25% said they would consider or are considering that option.

And although job sharing and flexible scheduling were rarely available as recently as 10 years ago, 8% of employers who responded to the survey now permit job sharing, and 35% offer flexible scheduling.

Information about where to get child care and how to select the best care is a service that is growing. The most notable example in Wisconsin is that of International Business Machines Corp., which contracts with community agencies in Milwaukee, Madison, Wausau and Green Bay to help employees with their child care searches.

Available funds often are the ticket to quality care and subsequent peace of mind. In the typical working family with preschoolers, child care is the fourth largest expenditure, averaging $3,000 to $5,000 per year.

Employers can help workers gain tax advantages by offering child care as part of a flexible spending account, thus removing the child care fund from tax liability. According to the survey, 49% of employers would consider or are considering this option, and 6% provide it.

One form of flexible benefit plan is the salary reduction option. Salary reduction enables employees to use pretax dollars to purchase dependent care services.

First Wisconsin National Bank of Milwaukee Vice President Roger Radebaugh said this service responds to the needs of working parents by offsetting the cost of child care. First Wisconsin chose the salary reduction option because it allows parents to choose their own child care arrangements while maintaining employee equity in company benefits.

Ken Maki, Vice President of Midwest Timber, a lumber brokerage and mill that operates in northern Wisconsin, has covered the child care expenses for his clerical staff through the salary reduction plan. Maki believes, "This benefit has helped me attract—and keep—competent clerical staff."

Virtually all national research on the benefits to employers who provide child care services has been based on work-site or near-site child care centers supported in some way by the employer. The Wisconsin survey showed that less than 1% of employers are providing this service and only 15% are willing to consider it.

However, those employers who have developed on-site or near-site centers appear to be reaping huge advantages in public relations and employee morale.

Robert Inslee, personnel director at S.C. Johnson & Son Inc., Racine, indicates that the most significant results since the company's near-site child care center opened in fall 1985 have been the overwhelming expressions of satisfaction and sense of security from parents who use it. He attributes their positive attitudes to the high level of parental involvement in the program.

According to Inslee, one plus at Johnson Wax was the availability of a non-profit organization to operate the center, conveniently located between two Johnson Wax work sites.

Inslee said, "The child care program was Johnson Wax's response to periodic employee opinion questionnaires and comments from employees on the lack of available quality child care." The company's motive from the outset was to be responsive to those needs.

But Marc Harding, a personnel staffer at Cray Research Inc. in Chippewa Falls, said definitively, "Our business is computers!"

Having made that priority clear, the company wants to maximize the opportunity for employees to receive any tax breaks available to offset child care costs. Cray soon will make the dependent care flexible spending account an option for workers with dependent care costs.

In addition, it is working with other employers in a Rice Lake industrial park as a consortium to support mutually convenient child care services, most likely to be provided by a non-profit organization.

As a pioneer in industrial-site child care, Marquette Electronics Inc., Milwaukee, claims that its child care center has been a success for its employees and the company, alike. Marquette Electronics President Michael Cudahy believes that "Employees have benefited from the ability to maintain job continuity while feeling confident that their children receive quality care. The company benefits from increased employee retention."

Since Cudahy perceives the cost of employee turnover to be the single most expensive problem in industry, the savings are considerable.

One requirement of the Marquette child care center is that it be as close to self-sustaining as possible. Child care fees pay for the salaries of the teachers and Marquette provides all consumable goods, including meals prepared in the company cafeteria.

Given the advantages of the on-site center and positive comments from employers, Cudahy said he is surprised that more companies haven't considered day care centers.

Thirty-five such employer-sponsored programs exist in the state, most associated with hospitals.

During 1985-86, over 200 employees attended seminars on employer-supported child care in Chippewa Falls, Madison, Appleton, Milwaukee, Stevens Point and Kohler. The seminars were presented by the Center for Consumer Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee through the Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project (WCCIP). For more information or a brochure on Choosing A Child Care Consultant, contact Patricia Mapp, Project Director at the Center for Consumer Affairs, (414) 224-4177.

This press release was written by Patricia Mapp, Project Director, WCCIP Employer Initiative through a subcontract with the Center for Consumer Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The project develops written materials and provides technical assistance on helping businesses meet the child care needs of their employees.

WCCIP • c/o WECA, 1245 E. Washington Ave., Madison, WI 53703

Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project 1987

#10 QUALITY CHILD CARE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
(Date)

MEDIA CONTACT:
(Name and Phone)

CHILD CARE CENTER RECRUITS NEW ENROLLEES

The _____ (name of your center) in _____ (your town) will kick off its annual recruitment campaign for new enrollees on _____ (date of Open House) with an Open House. All center staff and the director will be present to talk with parents about the center program and goals. Parents are encouraged to bring their children to the center so the children can become familiar with the outstanding equipment and activities available to them. Teachers will lead some activities with the children throughout the Open House and refreshments, nutritionally sound snacks, typical to the center's menu, will be served to children and parents. Slides of the children at work and play will be shown throughout the Open House with samples of the children's art and creative work on display.

_____ (name of director), center director, says that a free brochure, "Choosing Child Care," from the Wisconsin Child Care Information Center will be available to help parents make their choice. Parents are encouraged to choose their child's care center carefully so that the individual needs of their child may be met. The public is invited to attend!

This information has been prepared by the Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project. Federal, state and private funds support the WCCIP to start up and improve child care in Wisconsin.

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#10 QUALITY CHILD CARE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
(Date)

MEDIA CONTACT:
(Name and Phone)

HOW CAN PARENTS CHOOSE QUALITY CHILD CARE?

"Parents must take the responsibility to carefully select the child care program that meets the individual needs of their child," according to Betty Cleworth, president of the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, a professional organization of over 1,500 Wisconsin early childhood teachers. An increasing number of mothers with young children are entering the work force and they are more and more concerned about choosing a high quality child care program, be it a child care center or family day care home.

Willetta Shanklin, president of the Wisconsin Family Day Care Association, suggests that parents, "Look for a regulated provider with both training and experience in early education." Wisconsin licensing rules require that anyone be licensed who serves 4 or more unrelated children under the age of 7. Family day care homes serve 8 or less children. Shanklin goes on to say, "Be sure the provider makes you feel welcome to enter her home."

Group child care centers are licensed to serve more than 8 children. Corkie Nelson, past president of the Wisconsin Day Care Administrators Association, suggests that parents, "Consider the environment of the center or home; be sure that there are enough play materials and equipment. Observe the staff to see that their guidance and discipline methods are consistent with yours."

"We know that young children learn through active exploration of the world around them and through being with positive adult role models," adds Wendy Hinrichs Sanders, Project Director of the Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project. She suggests that parents be sure the activities include such things as water or sand play, blocks and housekeeping areas, small toys and books. She warns, "Be sure that you find the caregiver to be a model that you will accept for your child."

The Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project, funded with federal, state and private funds to start up and improve child care programs, warns parents of some factors that should cause a "red flag" to go up:

- Is there a feeling of openness or are you told to wait at the door?
- Do the children look happy, active and comfortable or are they listless, withdrawn, or dazed?
- Are there activities planned for the children or is the TV the main form of entertainment?
- Is the home or center clean and tidy or so unclean that it appears unhealthy?

Diane Adams, Director of the Dane County Community Coordinated Child Care (4-C's) suggests that parents have some responsibilities to the child care provider or program:

- Tell the caregiver about your child's special needs;
- Visit the center or home from time to time;
- Leave the phone number where you can be reached;
- Notify the caregiver in advance of your vacations; call early on sick days;
- Pay your fees regularly and on time;
- Respect your scheduled hours; be on time;
- Make time to confer with the caregiver regularly.

Some early childhood programs will be members of the National Academy of Preschool Programs which is sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). To become credentialed by the Academy the following program components are reviewed: interactions between staff and children; curriculum; physical environment; health and safety; and nutrition and food service.

For a free brochure, "Choosing Child Care," contact the Wisconsin Child Care Information Center at 800-362-7353 statewide or 255-1164 in Madison.

For information on child care programs in your area, contact your local early childhood professionl organization (insert name and telephone number).

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WISCONSIN CHILD CARE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

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